



Grant County Health Department

111 South Jefferson Street, Floor 2
Lancaster, Wisconsin 53813-1672

www.co.grant.wi.gov

Phone: (608) 723-6416

Fax: (608) 723-6501

For Immediate Release
January 29, 2014

Contact: Jeff Kindrai
608-723-6416

SURGEON GENERAL PROJECTS CHILDREN WILL DIE PREMATURELY UNLESS CURRENT SMOKING RATES DROP

Figure represents 1 in every 13 U.S. children; 5.6 million children nationwide

Approximately 5.6 million American children will die prematurely from smoking-related diseases unless the current smoking rates drop, according to a new Surgeon General's Report. The report, ***The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress***, calls the epidemic of cigarette smoking over the last century an enormous and avoidable public health tragedy. In just the last 50 years, 20 million Americans have died because of smoking. The new report estimates the human and financial tolls of the cigarette smoking epidemic, finding that it kills close to half a million Americans a year and costs more than \$289 billion a year in direct medical care and economic loss. In Wisconsin, smoking kills about 6,966 adults each year, and costs over 4 billion dollars in medical care and lost productivity.

Today's report comes 50 years after the historic first Surgeon General's Report, which concluded that cigarette smoking causes lung cancer in men. Since that 1964 report, evidence has linked smoking to diseases of nearly all the body's organs. And today's report establishes more and new links, finding that cigarette smoking causes diabetes, colorectal cancer and liver cancer.

The report also explains that smokers today have a greater risk of developing lung cancer than they did in 1964, even though they smoke fewer cigarettes. Changes in the design and composition of cigarettes may have contributed to this increase in risk. At least 70 of the chemicals in cigarette smoke are known carcinogens.

New findings in this report conclude that smoking causes rheumatoid arthritis and immune system weakness, increased risk for tuberculosis disease and death from TB, ectopic pregnancy and impaired fertility, cleft lip and cleft palates in babies of women who smoke during early pregnancy, erectile dysfunction in men, age-related macular degeneration, and increases the failure rate of cancer treatment. The report concludes that secondhand smoke exposure is now known to cause strokes in nonsmokers.

The report finds that tobacco control efforts have prevented at least 8 million early deaths since 1965, but that these evidence-based tobacco control interventions continue to be underutilized.

"The report reminds us what we have known for a long time, smoking, exposure to secondhand smoke, and tobacco use has cost us far too many lives," said Jeff Kindrai, Grant County Health Department Director. "We must continue to action to educate youth and to promote the health of everyone in Grant County." To learn what you can do, contact the Grant County Health Department at (608) 723-6416

Studies show about 70% of all smokers want to quit. They can get free help by calling **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)** or visiting www.smokefree.gov. To read the full report, ***The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress***, go to www.SurgeonGeneral.gov.

#

